LONDON TAVERN SIGNS.*

HAVING lately commented upon the various emblems displayed by tradesmen as indicative of their business, perhaps a few further remarks relative to the origin and meaning of public-house signs may not prove uninteresting.

In the preface to the "Law of Drinking," keeping a public-house is called the trade of the ivy bush: the bush was a sign so very general, that probably from thence arose the proverb "good wine needs no bush," or indication as to where it was sold. In "Good Newes and Bad Newes," 1612, a host says—

> "I rather will take down my bush and sign
> Than live by means of riotous expense."—

The ancient method of putting a bough of a tree upon anything, to signify that it was for disposal, is still exemplified by an old besom (or birch broom) being placed at the mast-head of a vessel that is intended for sale. In Dekker's "Wonderful Yeare," 1603, is the passage "Spied a bush at the end of a pole, the ancient badge of a countrey ale-house." And in Harris's Drunkard's Cup," p. 299, "Nay, if the house be not with an ivie bush let him have his tooles about him, nutmegs, rosemary, tobacco, with other the appurtenances, and he knows how of puddle ale to make a cup of English wine." From a passage in "Whimsies, or a new Cast of Characters," 1631, it would seem that signs in ale-houses succeeded birch poles.

It is usual in some counties, particularly Staffordshire, to hang a bush at the door of an ale-house, or mug house. Sir Thomas Browne considers that the human faces depicted on sign-boards, for the sun and moon, are relics of paganism, and that they originally meant Apollo and Diana. This has been noticed in Hudibras—

> "Tell me but what's the nat'ral cause
> Why on a sign no painter draws
> The full moon ever, but the half."

Fosbroke says, that the Bell Savage is a strange corruption of the Queen of Sheba; the Bell Savage, of which the device was a savage man standing by a bell, is supposed to be derived from the French Belle Sauvage, on account of a beautiful savage having been once shown there: by others it is considered, with more probability, to have been so named in compliment to some ancient landlady of the celebrated inn upon Ludgate-hill, whose surname was Savage, as in the close rolls of the 31st year of the reign of Henry VI. is an entry of a grant of that inn to "John Frensch, gentilman," and called "Savage's Ynne," alias the "Bell on the Hoof."

In Flecknoe's "Enigmatical Characters," 1665, in alluding to "your fanatick reformers," he says, "as for the signs, they have pretty well begun the reformation already, changing the sign of the Salutation of the Angel and our Lady into the Shouldier and Citizen, and the Catherine Wheel into the Cat and Wheel, so that there only wants their making the Dragon to kill St. George, and the Devil to tweak St. Dunstan by the nose to make the reformation compleat. Such ridiculous work they make of their reformation, and so zealous are they against all mirth and jollity, as they would pluck down the sign of the Cat and Fiddle, too, if it durst but play so loud as they might hear it."

The sign "In God is our Hope" is still to be seen at a public-house on the western road between Cranford and Slough. Coryatt mentions the "Ave Maria," with verses, as the sign of an alehouse abroad, and a street where all the signs on one side were of birds. The "Swan with Two Nicks, or Necks," as it is commonly called, was so termed from the two nicks or marks, to make known that it was a swan of the Vintners' Company, the swans of that company having two semicircular pieces cut from the upper mandible of the swan, one on each side, which are called nicks. The origin of the "Bolt-in-Tun" is thus explained. The bolt was the arrow shot from a cross-bow, and the tun or barrel was used as the target, and in this device the bolt is painted sticking in the bunghole. It appears not unreasonable to conclude, that hitting the bung was as great an object in crossbow shooting as it is to a member of a Toxopholite Club to strike the target in the bull's eye. The sign of the "Three Loggerheads" is two grotesque wooden heads, with the inscription "Here we three Loggerheads be," the reader being the third. "The Honest Lawyer" is depicted at a beer-shop at Stepney; the device is a lawyer with his head under his arm, to prevent his telling lies.

"The Lamb and Lark" occurs at Keynsham, near Bath, also in Printing-house-lane, Blackfriars, and has reference to a well-known proverb that we should go to bed with the lamb and rise with the lark. "The Eagle and Child" is by some persons imagined to allude to Jupiter taking Ganymede, but others suppose that it merely commemorates the fact of a child having been carried off by an eagle. "The Bull and Gate," which at first appears incomprehensible, is a corruption from Boulogne Gate, or one of the gates of Boulogne, and is said to have been so named in compliment to Henry the Eighth having taken that place in 1544; the "Bull and Mouth" also is considered to have a similar derivation, from mouth or harbour of Boulogne. The sign of the "Two Chairmen" was formerly not an unfrequent emblem in London, the public-houses bearing it being at that time much resorted to by the men who carried sedan-chairs; as the sign of the "Running Footman," in Charles-street, Berkeley-square, was probably patronised by that active but now extinct class of men, who are commemorated by Sir Walter Scott in his novel of the "Bride of Lammermoor." The "Pig and Whistle," a common sign in the north of England, is supposed to mean the elephant, the trunk of the animal being the whistle. The "Hog in Armour" is defined as the rhinoceros; the "Devil and the Bag of Nails," as Pan and the Bacchanals; the "Cat and Wheel," the Catherine wheel, on which St. Catherine was tortured; the "Goat and Compasses," a corruption of a sign of the Puritans, "God encompasseth us."

In the neighbourhood of the Fleet Prison, before the year 1753, a sign of two hands joined indicated a marriage-house, or a house in which Fleet marriages were celebrated similar to the Gretna Green marriages. These places were not all public-houses. At some of them a person was stationed at the door to invite passers-by to come in and be married. They were about sixty in number. Fleet marriages were totally abolished by the passing of the Marriage Act in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of George the Second, and these register-books are now deposited in the registry of the Bishop of London.

G. J. RHODES.

* See Vol. viii. p. 526.

LONDON THEATRES IN THE TIME OF CHARLES II.

"Mr. Urban" is becoming gallant and gay in his new youth; and in his 120th year has taken under his protection Nell Gwyn; whose house, by way, on the Park side of Pall Mall, now shelters the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts! The story of Nell Gwyn, commenced by Mr. P. Cunningham, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,* is to be true throughout, and promises to present a curious picture of the age of Charles II. We take from the opening number a note of the London theatres.

"*The King's Theatre* (the stage on which Nell Gwyn performed), or 'The Theatre' as it was commonly called, stood in Drury-lane, on the site of the present building, and was the first theatre, as the present is the fourth, erected on the site. It was small, with few pretensions to architectural beauty, and was first opened on the 8th of April, 1663, when Nell was a girl of thirteen. The chief entrance was in Little Russell-street, not as now in Brydges-street. The stage was lighted with wax candles, on brass censers or cressets. The pit lay open to the weather for the sake of light, but was subsequently covered in with a glazed cupola, which however only imperfectly protected the audience, so that in stormy weather the house was thrown into disorder, and the people in the pit were fain to rise.

The Duke's Theatre, commonly called 'The Opera,' from the nature of its performances, stood at the back of what is now the Royal College of Surgeons, in Portugal-row, on the south side of Lincoln's-inn-fields. It was originally a tennis-court, and, like its rival, was run up hurriedly to meet the wants of the age. The interior arrangements and accommodation were much the same as at Killigrew's house." As to the appointments, "the dresses at both houses were magnificent and costly, but little or no attention was paid to costume. The King, the Queen, the Duke, and several of the richer nobility, gave their coronation suits to the actors, and on extraordinary occasions a play was equipped at the expense of the King. Old court-dresses were contributed by the gentry, and birthday suits continued to be presented as late as the reign of George II. The scenery at the Duke's house was superior to the King's, for Davenant, who introduced the opera among us, introduced us at the same time to local and expensive scenery. Battles were no longer represented

> 'With four or five most vile and ragged foils,'

or coronations by a crown taken from a deal table by a single attendant."

* The present number contains an admirable likeness of our late esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Amyot, F.R.S.

EFFECT OF THE PAPER DUTY.*

MR. CHARLES KNIGHT has published a pamphlet in that lucid and convincing style which distinguishes his other efforts to spread abroad a knowledge of right principles, showing the effect of the duty in discouraging the production of good cheap works. In it he shows—

"1. That the tax presses most unequally upon the fund for the remuneration of those who are labouring for the instruction and amusement of the people.

2. That this tax, which in its effects upon cheap literature is excessive, operates against the extension of the best English authorship, and interferes with the improvement of all the productions of the press.

3. That it diminishes the author's profits to the lowest point; and substitutes for useful English works invasions of foreign copyrights—or encourages the production of inferior and injurious works by unskilled labourers in literature.

With the craving for extreme cheapness amidst the great body of book-buyers,—and with the growing appreciation of what is really excellent in literature—of what is clear, condensed, imaginative, earnest, benevolent,—what prevents us having the noblest popular literature in the world? The inroads upon the labour-fund out of which the best authorship is to be supported. The State, which exacts a paper duty, and thus robs the capital which would otherwise go to the remuneration of literary industry, is the power which denies the popular writer his maintenance, or abridges his profits and limits his fame."

* The Case of the Authors as regards the Paper Duty. 90, Fleet-street, 1851.

SELF-TAUGHT SCOTCH SCULPTORS.

IN an obituary notice of the late sculptor James Thom, of Ayrshire, at page 250 of vol. viii., you mentioned as one of his work "Old Mortality." Allow me to suggest a doubt as to the correctness of this part of the notice. In the year 1839 or 1840 the statue of "Old Mortality" reclining upon a grave ("*through*") stone was exhibited in London, executed in a grayish sand-stone. If this be the work alluded to, it is the production, not of Thom, but of another self-taught artist, Corrie, of Dumfries. He is a native of the neighbourhood, and was bred a *whinstone* mason, but going to Dumfries, adopted the sandstone, which alone is worked there.

After exhibiting "Old Mortality," he was employed a good deal in making portrait busts, and executed also two figures in a similar style to "Old Mortality,"—Dominie Sampson and Meg Merrilees. "Gape, sinner, an' swallow." These were not nearly so successful as the first, and I am not aware that he has since produced any work in this style. He removed to Liverpool, but after a short time returned to Dumfries, where, I believe, he still practises.

It is worth while to notice a curious incident in connection with the history of the figure of "Old Mortality." It was disposed of by subscription, and on the day of "drawing" was

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